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NMRC & STEM: Encourages students to pursue science and engineering careers

Filed under COMMUNITY SUPPORT, FLEET AND THE FLEET MARINE FORCE, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (NO COMMENTS)

Captain Richard L. Haberberger, Jr., commanding officer, Naval Medical Research Center

Often, when we talk about Navy Medicine’s notable achievements in biomedical research and development, we highlight those who came before us whose efforts and accomplishments laid the cornerstones for the foundation of our successful enterprise. To sustain our legacy, we also need to look to the future, and that means reaching out to our nation’s young people and inspiring them to plan a productive and creative career in medicine and research. The need is great be-cause large numbers of Naval science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professionals will be retiring over the next few years, and fewer American students are graduating with the preparation and interest needed to pursue STEM careers. STEM fields are academic and professional disciplines considered the core technological underpinnings of a successful society, and the strength of the STEM workforce is viewed as an indicator of a nation’s sustainability.

This summer, NMRC is proud to have six high school students, five undergradu-ate students and one graduate student participating in our STEM outreach efforts. These students represent four area high schools (Northwest, Richard Montgomery, Montgomery Blair, and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology) and four colleges (Gettysburg College, the University of Pitts-burgh-Bradford, the University of Georgia, and the University of Toledo). All will be working in the Infectious Dis-eases Research Directorate here.

Did you know that only 33 percent of eighth graders are interested in STEM majors and only six percent of high school seniors will get a bachelor’s degree in a STEM field? The U.S. is

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ranked 27th out of 29 developed countries for the rate of STEM bachelor’s degrees awarded. Six percent of U.S. undergraduates major in engineering com-pared with 12 percent in Europe, 20 percent in Singapore and 40 percent in China. I encourage all of our science staff to actively serve as ambassadors of Navy Medicine research and development and reach out to both school-children and college students who will be our future scientists and researchers.

For more information on the Navy’s STEM program, visit the Office of Naval Research website at <http://www.stem2stern.org/index>.

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